

Online Forum: Afro Descendant Participation in the Inter-American System through Deliberation

What is this online forum?

The online forum is a space to bring concerns about issues that Afro Descendants face to the forefront of the hemispheric policy making agenda. Organized by Partners of the Americas, in collaboration with the Centro de Mujeres Afrocostarricenses, Global Rights, the Inter-American Foundation, the Inter-Agency Consultation on Race in Latin America, and the Inter-American Democracy Network, the forum supports the participation of Afro Descendants in the Inter-American system. This initiative builds on *Virtual Deliberation: Creating a Shared Hemispheric Agenda*, eight online deliberative forums held in the spring of 2005. The results of these eight civil society forums are being shared with governments to inform mandate development for the Fourth Summit of the Americas.

Who can participate?

Participation in the online forum is open to members of civil society from throughout the hemisphere who are working on or concerned about Afro Descendant issues. The deliberation will be conducted in English and Spanish, but written submissions in Portuguese and French will also be accepted. Weekly and midweekly summaries will be provided in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Why is my participation important?

The online forum is a unique opportunity for those concerned about Afro Descendant issues to work together to establish shared strategies for raising the profile of Afro Descendant concerns in the Americas and for influencing hemispheric policy. The forum will complement government and Organization of American States-driven civil society spaces, and the results of the deliberation will be shared with decision makers at the hemispheric level.

How will the online forum work?

Using a deliberative process, an expert moderator will encourage participants to consider key issues facing Afro Descendants in the region and the benefits and tradeoffs of different policy options for addressing these issues. The five-week online forum will allow participants time to reflect on issues, engage with others on their ideas, and seek more information. The results of the Inter-American Forum of Afro Descendant People and background papers on the Summits and on key issues facing Afro Descendants in the Americas will provide a common starting point for participants.

When will the online forums take place?

September 19 - October 21, 2005

How can I get involved?

For more information, visit <http://www.partners.net/hemisphericforum> or contact Partners of the Americas at forohemisferico@partners.net.